



Alice Voyle Rashleigh, 1888-1954, Carbondale, PA

Volunteer efforts rehabilitating historic Maplewood Cemetery

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is one in a series of articles in the Carbondale News presented by the Maplewood Cemetery Association offering examples of the many historic, unique and interesting gravesites in Maplewood Cemetery.

A broad range of civic-minded individuals and organizations have donated time, labor, machines, guidance, services, and food and beverages for the volunteers who are now at work in rehabilitating Carbondale's historic Maplewood Cemetery.

The Maple Avenue entrance to the cemetery has been rehabilitated and new steps down into the cemetery have been installed. Grass cutting, brush control, knot-week control, garbage pick up, and tree trimming are now underway throughout, and visible signs of good progress are very evident.

"The restoration process is off to a good start," observed Dr. S. Robert Powell of the Maplewood Cemetery Association, "and we are confident that this project will be carried to a successful conclusion. It's not going to happen overnight. It will be a long process, but we have begun and that's very important."

In this historic cemetery are interred the earthly remains of more than seven thousand persons, including those of many of the leading community and civic leaders in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Lackawanna Valley.

Robert F. Vandenberg, Washington St., noted, "Here in Maplewood, there are even headstones with Welsh inscriptions on them and stones that were imported from Scotland by early residents. Such stones, which date from the early 1830s, mark the graves of many of the pioneer settlers of Carbondale, and many of the city's founding fathers are buried here. Maplewood Cemetery is really a history book, when you come right down to it, and it's good to see this restoration work going on."

Carbondale City Councilman John Gigliotti,



Alice Voyle Rashleigh, a prominent and highly respected Carbondale educator, died on July 13, 1954, and her earthly remains were interred in Carbondale's historic Maplewood Cemetery. A concerted effort is now underway to restore the Cemetery and to maximize its potential as a historic destination for residents and visitors to the Lackawanna Valley.

who is one of the leaders of this restoration project, has proposed that an appropriate historical sign be erected at one of the entrances to the cemetery. "We've got to get the word out that this cemetery is one of the greatest historical assets of the City of Carbondale," Gigliotti added. "This cemetery and the many other historical assets of the community can stimulate heritage tourism in this community and in the Lackawanna Valley. It's a great opportunity, and we've got to give it our best."

Alice Voyle Rashleigh, whose earthly remains are buried in Maplewood

Cemetery, was born in Carbondale on August 29, 1870, and in 1940, after teaching in the Carbondale schools for 52 years, she retired from teaching. At the time of her retirement, she was principal of School No. 8, the John Marshall School on Belmont Street (the Turkey Hill store now stands on the site).

At a retirement dinner in her honor, she said, in part: "At 9 P.M., 76 years ago, I arrived in a thunder storm--but later the sun shone through the rain drops producing a rainbow for me. I did not find the pot of gold but I found Happiness in the love of children and the love of friends. Now I am at bat in the 7th inning of my life. . ."

In March 1946, she wrote a seven-part history of Carbondale that was published in the Carbondale News. In 1951, at the time of the City's centennial celebrations, she wrote Carbondale, "My Carbondale: A History of the Pioneer City."

Her maternal grandfather was Thomas Voyle, three-term Mayor of Carbondale, 1867-69, 1873-74, and 1882-83.

Miss Rashleigh was an enthusiastic supporter of the Columbia Hose Company, and in 1946 the members of that hose company awarded her a Gold Badge Life Membership and Membership Card No. 5.

To participate in this restoration project at Maplewood Cemetery, interested persons are asked to contact the cemetery at Post Office Box 151, Carbondale, or to phone the association at 282-0385.

In the next article in this series on the rehabilitation of Maplewood Cemetery, a biographical portrait of P. C. Gritman, one of Carbondale's founding fathers, will be featured.